

ALTESS is creating more initiatives that will enhance student services and further reduce student-training costs. One such initiative is the new travel management system that is being integrated with the training application system. This will provide a one-stop student travel process. ALTESS' commitment to train and provide the best customer service resulted in more than 24,000 workforce members receiving training in FY04. ALTESS has helped the Army achieve the lowest student training costs for DAU training and the highest training utilization rate (averaging 95 percent since 1996) of all DOD services.

However, it is ALTESS's personal touch that gets the mission done. ALTESS personnel are in daily contact with students, supervisors, training personnel and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service to resolve training and travel issues. Whether a student is being deployed, cannot travel, can only train at a specific time or is training for promotion, ALTESS meets these challenges and provides outstanding service and assistance.

If you are interested in learning more about our products and services, please contact ALTESS at (540) 731-3434 or DSN 231-3434.

Worth Reading

The Donkeys

Alan Clark
Pimlico, 1961



Reviewed by Scott Curthoys, a counterintelligence analyst contracted to a federal agency, and a retired Army military intelligence and foreign area officer.

Military observers and members of the media are increasingly discussing how the war in Iraq is taking a toll on the U.S. military. It has been suggested that the war in Iraq is destroying the Army. Much of this recent speculation can be attributed to the 2004 presidential campaign. Nevertheless, influential

people in political circles sympathetic to the Bush administration and its policies are also voicing concerns.

Despite these concerns, the professional core of the Army still stands as a viable fighting force. The war in Iraq is not going to destroy the professional foundation of the U.S. Army. This stands in stark contrast to the fate that befell the United Kingdom's Regular Army units in 1915, a destruction told with grace and poignancy by well-known military historian, the late Alan Clark, in *The Donkeys*. (The book's title is derived from a conversation between two German officers in which British soldiers are described as fighting like lions but led by donkeys.)

In Clark's own words, *The Donkeys* is, "The story of the destruction of an army — the old professional Army of the United Kingdom that always won the last battle ... and were machine gunned, gassed and finally buried in 1915." The reasons Clark offers for this destruction should resonate with today's leaders at all levels.

Clark does an excellent job of describing the British army's senior leaders at the beginning of WWI. He sketches the personalities of the principals, their relationships with each other, the conditions of the soldiers and the gap between the army's senior leaders and its private soldiers. However, the reader can sometimes become lost in the parade of names because Clark assumes a certain level of historical knowledge on the reader's part.

He highlights the tensions between senior British and French leaders. Relations between British Commander-in-Chief Field Marshal Sir John French, his French counterpart and their respective staffs, were often marked by distrust and arrogance. The reader gets a palpable sense that the French military leadership looked down on their British comrades and viewed them simply as support to the French army's main effort.

Unlike WWII where the major combatants drew on lessons from the previous world war, the British had no repository of experience in WWI. They engaged new weapons using old tactics. Consequently, British commanders constantly sought to create the conditions of open maneuver for cavalry only to be blunted by machine guns, gas and the limits of their own tactical thinking.

Clark describes in stark detail the four major battles of 1915 — battles that decimated the British regular army and caused the United Kingdom to turn to Kitchener's recruits for help. The Neuve Chapelle battle plan, where massed

British formations were thrown against a small section of front in an attempt to break through, was seemingly repeated later in the year at Aubers Ridge. The British commanders failed to learn the lesson of the earlier battle and didn't develop a counter plan to the German's well-sighted machine guns emplaced 800-1,000 yards behind the line. As a consequence, both battles ended with high British casualties and little or no key terrain gained.

The Battle of Ypres, famous for the first German use of poison gas, was a study in inflexible leadership by British commanders. Instead of reducing the salient and withdrawing to a more defensible position, British commanders ordered a counterattack that was ineffective and caused many battlefield casualties.

The British retaliated with a gas attack at Loos, France. However, this attack was uncoordinated and resulted in a casualty rate of more than 80 percent (8,246 British casualties out of approximately 10,000 attackers), compared to zero German losses. With this debacle, the professional core of the British Army was completely destroyed.

For many current Soldiers, WWI is remote and unknown. However, to many historians, that conflict represents an early example of how industrialization impacts war, a process that began during the American Civil War. As the art of war continues to evolve, modern leaders can learn from the British commanders' mistakes to become more effective on the battlefield. As such, *The Donkeys* should be required reading for every Army senior leader.

Conferences

Acquisition E-Business Conference Slated

Strategic acquisition through electronic systems is the future, and e-business is leading the journey to achieve this ideal. The Office of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, E-Business (DPAP, EB) is hosting an E-Business Conference, May 23-26, 2005, in Orlando, FL. Acquisition and procurement executives who oversee strategic plans and manage transformation policies are encouraged to attend.

The E-Business Conference will focus on the approaches, strategies and initiatives that will make this environment a reality. The conference will cover:

- Enterprise architecture — movement away from application silos.
- Portfolio management — an assessment of technical and functional capabilities supporting strategic acquisition.
- Transition planning — a plan to transform the acquisition domain from what is to what should be.
- Governance — reflective of both procurement and acquisition processes and strategies.

The 2005 DPAP EB Conference will convene at the Rosen Centre Hotel located at 9840 International Drive, Orlando, FL. For more information about the hotel, go to www.rosencentre.com or call (407) 996-9840. For registration or additional information, go to <http://www.dodebconference.com>.

Contracting Community Highlights



This issue's feature article highlights the career development initiatives undertaken by the Picatinny Center for Contracting and Commerce (PC3) at Picatinny Arsenal, NJ. The article is a collaborative effort by four Army Contracting and Acquisition Career Program (CP-14) interns at Picatinny, and it presents detailed information on the formation and processes of the organizations that have been established to augment career development in the PC3. The three self-directed groups described in the article are the Procuring Contracting Officers' (PCOs') Roundtable, New Associates Development Group (NADG) and Associates Development Group (ADG). These groups' goals are to leverage a more efficient, mission-driven organizational performance for its members by engendering a climate of continual process improvement and mission understanding through peer support.



In addition to the feature article and the regular "DAR Council Corner," we are proud to pass on news from several of our contracting organizations. We have also included